

## <Special Feature> Risk Management of Schools

### Risk Management of Schools

Tomoaki Chikusa

#### Introduction

Risk management is an extremely important issue for school management. It features as a theme “Risk Management and School Management” in vol. 10 (1997) of this journal. However, in the seven years since then, there have been several situations that have increased people’s concern regarding risk management in schools and raised questions regarding the method of risk management. In one case, a person went into a school and killed and wounded children. At the time, educational administration and school management were in the process of reorganization to establish school autonomy. There is therefore an increasing need for schools to adopt appropriate systems of risk management. In this short paper we focus on these two points and discuss the method of risk management in schools.

#### 1. Crimes in schools and crimes against children

There were 28,982 crimes in schools in 1996, which increased to 44,866 in 2002. The number of heinous crimes, including homicide, robbery, arson, and sexual assault, was 48 in 1996 and doubled to 96 in 2002.<sup>1</sup> The number of crimes against child victims has also been increasing dramatically. The number of victims of heinous crime aged 15 or lower was 3,669 in 1993 and 6,733 in 2002. It increased particularly rapidly from 4,810 in 1999 to 6,236 in 2000.<sup>2</sup> We are now facing the risk that children’s safety is being threatened.

The stabbing of children at Ikeda Elementary School attached to Osaka-Kyoiku University in June 2001 was particularly shocking. A suspicious looking individual entered the school and brutally stabbed many victims at random. Following this incident, the awareness and attitude towards risk management in schools were fundamentally reconsidered. A similar incident occurred in Kyoto Municipal Hino Elementary School in 1999 and a document “Security of Infants, Preschool Children and Schoolchildren, and Risk Management of Schools (Request)” (January 7, 2000) was issued by the Education Ministry of that time. However, Ikeda Elementary School did not take the request seriously and failed to learn from the incident in Hino Elementary School, for which Ikeda Elementary School received severe criticism.

Despite the increasing awareness of the security and risk management of schools, one cannot completely prevent intruders from entering schools. According to the information released by the National Police Agency in January 15, 2004, there were 22 reported incidents of intruders entering school areas and committing crimes that endangered children. In 9 out of the 22 cases, the criminals had weapons. Eighteen out of 22 cases were treated as crimes, including 1 homicide attempted, 6 injurious assaults, 3 obscene acts, 3 weapons violations, and 5 unlawful entries. At the time of the incidents, 11 schools had not locked the school gates, 8 schools had gates partly locked, and 3 schools did not even have fences. With the mounting anxiety of guardians regarding the security of schools and increasing concern for safety and risk management, measures, safety control, and risk management conducted by the government and schools have been subjected to close scrutiny.

Considering the increase in the number of crimes, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology published the “Emergent Appeal for School Security” on January 20, 2004. It presented key points to make specific efforts for schools and school administrators, and asked local communities and local related organizations and groups to cooperate in making networks and safe and secure places for children.

## 2. Risk management tasks of central and prefectural governments for schools

### (1) Measures taken by the central government

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology started emergency plans and strengthened the risk management measures since the tragedy at Ikeda Elementary School.

The “Inspection Items for the Security of Infants, Preschool Children and Schoolchildren and Safety Control of Schools (Examples)” was published in January 2000, although people did not learn from it before the Ikeda Elementary School incident. The Ministry first revised the “Inspection Items for the Security of Infants, Preschool Children and Schoolchildren and Safety Control of Schools (Examples)” in August 2001, and sent it to the officials who headed the educational board in every prefecture in Japan. In the revised edition, detailed items were added such as system development in schools; identification techniques of visitors, emergency system against the entry of suspicious individuals, and the security of school facilities, and new items were added such as a security system during classes and lunch breaks. It required thorough control of school safety.

In November 2002, the Survey Research Collaborator’s Committee issued a report “Anticrime Measures of School Facilities” based on a yearlong research survey on the

safety control of school facilities. It points out several fundamental ideas for crime prevention: The development of school facilities open to local communities after taking satisfactory anticrime measures to ensure safety; the importance of facility planning and vision for checking visitors, installation of fences, and introduction of a reporting system in each classroom; coordination with personnel crime-busting measures and establishment of a cooperative structure with local communities. In addition, the report shows the detailed points for planning and designing anticrime measures. Following the report, the “Guideline for School Facility Development” was revised in August 2003, and the anticrime measures are given in Chapter 9. The basic points of the guideline are overall anticrime measures, securing of visibility and sufficient spaces, control of approach and intruder prevention, periodical inspection and evaluation, active usage of anticrime facilities and others. It also shows detailed measures and points for preventing crimes on the border of or in school grounds, preventing crimes in school buildings, introducing an anticrime monitoring system, and introducing a reporting system. The safety control of school facilities should be conducted in accordance with the guideline.

The “Project to Relieve Children’s Anxiety” started in 2002. The project aims at school safety and psychological care to establish safe and secure schools. As part of the project, the “Risk Management Manual Against the Intrusion of Suspicious Individuals” and “Sample Cases of Safety Control Measures Taken by Schools” were published in 2002. In 2004, the following activities were conducted: promotion of an anticrime seminar, new production and distribution of reference materials for anticrime educators and trainers, model activities for promoting school safety in cooperation with local communities, school safety promotion forum, new school-community cooperative healthcare activities. In addition, the “New Plan for Providing Places for Children” started in 2004 at schools all over the country to secure activity places for children after school or on holidays in cooperation with adults in local communities. The “Local Children Classroom Promotion Activity,” prepares safe and secure places for children in school grounds or classrooms. Furthermore, the “Safety Control Manual” was issued in May 2004 to promote the activity and illustrate the main points. Securing safe places for children’s activities has thus been promoted in cooperation with the community.

As summarized above, safety control and risk management of schools is now one of the most important issues for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. This activity is linked to the National Police Agency. Upon the publication of the “Risk Management Manual Against the Intrusion of Suspicious Individuals,” the Agency issued “The Promotion of Anticrime Instructions and Training to Prevent

Crimes against Children” with the help of the ‘Risk Management Manual Against the Intrusion of Suspicious Individuals’” (April 3, 2003; National Police Agency Document No. 102), and, upon the publication of “Sample Cases of Safety Control Measures Taken by Schools -Focusing on Risk Management against the Intrusion of Suspicious Individuals,” “On the Promotion of Anticrime Instructions and Training to Prevent Crimes against Children” with the help of ‘Sample Cases of Safety Control Measures Taken by Schools’” (July 2, 2003, National Police Agency document No. 183) was issued for the chief of the Community Safety Bureau of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and prefectural police chiefs.

## (2) Measures taken by the prefectures

Every prefectural educational board also issued a safety control manual and strengthened risk management measures. Here we consider the “Risk Management Manual” (March 2001) of Okayama Prefectural Educational Board, “For Securing the Safety of Schoolchildren” (July 2001) of Osaka Prefectural Educational Board, and “School Risk Management Guidelines” (March, 2002) of Hyogo Prefectural Educational Board.

The “Risk Management Manual” of Okayama Prefectural Educational Board was issued before the Ikeda Elementary School incident, and shows not only measures against suspicious individuals but also includes a fundamental guideline for desired measures on the basis of analysis and examination of various incidents and accidents in a wide range of fields. For establishing risk management systems at schools, it describes important points on the preparation of emergency response manuals, raising risk management consciousness and establishing emergency response systems at schools, emergency response at the occurrence of a crisis, response to the mass media, cooperation with parents and local communities, response to lawsuits and information disclosure, and others. It classifies the points of the risk management into “School Life,” “School Healthcare,” “School Management,” and “Teachers and Staff.” In the “School Management” category, measures against property destruction and loss caused by suspicious individuals are discussed.

The educational board of Osaka Prefecture, where the Ikeda Elementary School is located, made a guideline especially for the response to suspicious individuals. It says, “We did not assume any incidents in which a suspicious individual attacks children in a classroom and a number of children are killed and wounded. The risk management of schools was deficient in this point.” and “The guideline ‘For Securing Schoolchildren Safety’ was issued as a quick response in case of similar incidents and to minimize

damage.” The guideline shows detailed measures for improving safety control systems of schools and establishing risk management systems and security systems to ensure children’s safety. It also gives a guideline for the security of children in cooperation with guardians, PTA, local communities, and related organizations with the motto “Adults join together to protect children.”

The “School Risk Management Guideline” of Hyogo Educational Board was also created as a measure against suspicious individuals, as seen in the subtitle “To Protect Children Against Suspicious Individuals”. It summarizes basic ideas on risk management and presents important points for establishing a risk management system to protect children from suspicious individuals. The board also issued a manual, gave specific examples of activities, and points to keep in mind concerning risk management in accordance with the actual state of children, relation to the development of open schools and the risk management, establishment of risk management systems, measures for safety controls, and development of risk response systems. Another characteristic of the guideline issued by the Hyogo Prefecture Educational Board is that it refers in detail to the comprehension of children’s mental attitude and the psychological care to give to children after a crisis.

With these manuals and guidelines, the prefectures promote establishing risk management systems to ensure children’s safety at each school.

### (3) Requirement of resources

Above, we considered the basic principles of the risk management measures of the central government and prefectures. As discussed, a detailed manual for safe control and risk management needs to be issued and enforced. In addition, there are many items to inspect and keep in mind. The recent tragic incident underlines the importance of these measures.

However, it is also clear that the distribution of guidelines for issuing a risk management manual is not sufficient to prevent the intrusion of suspicious individuals and ensure children’s safety. Conducting risk management based on the guideline and establishing full systems would cause an enormous physical burden on teachers and staff who are always in contact with children and on school principals who are in charge of school management. Therefore material resources such as security equipment and human resources such as security guards need to be injected to pursue a higher level of risk management systems. As the guidelines that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology and the educational boards issued may be difficult for persons engaged in educational activities to follow, we may need dedicated staff for risk

management.

Development of materials and human resources is not a panacea. Principals, teachers, and staff are required to make a smooth and adequate system management of schools. As the authority and responsibility of schools have expanded in response to requests for strengthened school autonomy, risk management of schools has become increasingly important, and school management has to be developed with an emphasis on risk management.

### 3. Risk management and system management of schools

#### (1) System management of schools

An educational administrative reform is currently underway aiming at decentralization and expansion of the discretion of schools. The bottom line of the reform seems to be that the current form of educational administration and school management cannot respond to the social changes and the enhancement of the related educational needs and diversity. To meet the increasing educational needs and diversity, a flexible system to respond to the needs of children and local communities is required. Schools are expected to have creative ingenuity and develop a characteristic school to meet the needs. To achieve the required responsibilities, schools need to adopt new ideas and techniques of school management.

System management is to develop the variety of resources schools have and take appropriate action for the purpose of schools as organizations, and is actually a technique for surviving in the environment of varying management organizations.<sup>3</sup> As successful companies understand customer's needs and respond to needs in order to make a profit and expand, schools should be more sensitive to the needs of children, guardians, and local communities and keep revising and improving the means of school organizations to give better-suited education.

The basis of system management is continuous activities to determine the opinions of children, guardians, and local communities, collect and analyze their ideas and opinions from an educational viewpoint, and revise and reform the school systems based on the analysis, in the management circle of P (Plan) – D (Do) – C (Check) – A (Action).<sup>4</sup> For this purpose, visions and information have to be shared by forming a cooperative system inside and outside schools. The risk management should be characterized within the framework of system management, in other words, promotion of system management itself is risk management. In terms of the management circle, we need to carry out the Check and the Action consciously in our daily lives.

The relationship with the outside is also important. For example, one needs

information from local communities to respond to suspicious individuals, and one may need to ask guardians and people in the communities to watch children when they walk the streets to and from schools to reduce the risk.

## (2) Risk management and system management of schools

The introduction of system management to schools is requested in the educational administrative reform that aims at establishing school's autonomy. The educational administrative reform examines the current and past form of schools and aims at developing schools that can adjust to changes in society and respond to people's needs. In other words, the reform is an activity to recognize the risk in the current form of schools and change the school system accordingly, which indicates that system management is nothing but risk management. A passive stance toward the reform would increase public mistrust of schools and result in a schools crisis.

Risk management is conducted to predict, prevent, and handle a risk.<sup>5</sup> To predict a risk, one needs to examine inside and outside schools every day, check the appearance of children, and share the obtained information. The inspection and evaluation is important. If a problem is found, it has to be improved immediately, which will lead to risk prevention. Cooperative relations with guardians, local communities and related local organizations should be maintained on a daily basis, and system management with sensitive responses to the environment outside schools is required.

We need to take quick and appropriate action according to the manual to respond to emergencies. It is therefore important to produce and follow up the manual. For this purpose we should observe children's actual behavior during emergencies and check and revise the manual, if necessary. With reference to the manuals issued by the educational boards or the ones<sup>6</sup> sold in bookstores, production of an appropriate manual would not be difficult. However, the content of the manual should be changed depending on the circumstances of each school, and the circumstances have to be observed and examined in detail to ensure that the manual is appropriate for the school. Also, the necessary manual may vary from year to year, since some children, teachers, and staff are switched every year at schools. Overly formal manuals would not be useful. In the practical operation of the manual, we should recognize a risk comprehensively and take flexible action according to the situation not just by following the manual.

Simple repetition of the PDCA cycle for system management would weaken school systems. The school evaluation would not clarify critical issues unless essential problems are precisely acknowledged.<sup>7</sup> Each teacher and staff member must have the ability to perceive problems accurately and the ability should be gathered from each

individual to strengthen the organization. System management is to bind individual power into organizational power.

### (3) Schools as educational grounds and risk management

The purpose of school systems is to educate children. The school environment has to be built in the most desirable form for education. It is particularly important to ensure children's safety and conduct risk management. However, attention should be paid to the risk that enhanced anxiety regarding school safety could lead to excessive risk management and cause negative impact on the fields of education, that is, schools. Risk management measures have been strengthened after "9.11" to fight against terrorism and to lessen anxiety regarding the increase of crimes. This movement led to a tendency to accept excessive monitoring and control by public authorities to obtain security, and some people are concerned about such a controlled society.<sup>8</sup> The central task of schools is to create an environment in which children can live freely, vivaciously and focus on learning, and schools cannot accomplish this mission by just protecting children's safety. If schools were devoted only to the safety control issues, schools would be failing.

The mission of schools is to gain credibility from children, guardians, and local communities and establish distinctive school systems suitable to their needs and the circumstances. In particular, risk management is an essential to ensure children's safety and develop secure schools. The problem is how to handle and acknowledge risk management and utilize it to promote the creation of schools in the required form. Principals, teachers, and staff are being asked to develop a vision for schools and education.

### Concluding remarks

I visit many schools to give on-site guidance for teaching practice, conduct survey research, and give lectures at school seminars. The response to a visitor varies from school to school. I visited one school for a seminar some time ago. I parked my car in a parking lot and walked to the entrance. I found a teacher talking with a student. They seemed to be in a club activity. The teacher noticed me, made a slight bow, and turned to the student without saying anything to me. I was surprised. It was my first visit to the school and I met him for the first time. Maybe he thought he did not need to say anything because I wore a suit and tie. But merely assuming that I was a lecturer for a school seminar or some such is dangerous. He should have said "Hello" and briefly talked with me to determine who I was and what I was doing. The evaluation of a school changes largely by the way it responds to visitors. Every school probably teaches



children to make the usual greetings. Risk management starts with conducting such common-sense activities.

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- 1 “Survey committee report on the safety control of schools attached to national universities,” Dec. 2003, P.10. (in Japanese)
2. *ibid*, P. 13. (in Japanese)
3. Ryoichi Asano, “Viewpoint introducing system management” (“Future school and system management” ed. by Kazuaki Kioka, Kyoiku-Kaihatsu Kenkyujo, 2003), P.62. (in Japanese)
4. Kazuaki Kioka, “Basic problems in school evaluation –Questioning on the past and school evaluation in future” (*ibid*), P.8-16. (in Japanese)
5. “Common sense of law on risk management” ed. by Yukihiro Hishimura, (Kyoiku-Kaihatsu Kenkyujo, 1997), P.2-4. (in Japanese)
6. For example, “Easy risk management manual” ed. by Reiji Takashina (Toyokan, 2001); Koichi Oizumi. “Risk management guideline of schools to protect children” (Kyoiku-Kaihatsu Kenkyujo, 2004). (in Japanese)
7. Kazuaki Kioka, “Basic problems in risk management and safety net of schools” (“Risk management and safety net of schools” ed. by Kazuaki Kioka, Kyoiku-Kaihatsu Kenkyujo, 2004), P. 8-13. (in Japanese)
8. Takao Saito, “Fascism toward security,” (Iwanami, 2004). (in Japanese)